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VICTORIA PEABODY ;

OR,

A TRUE WOMAN.

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

✓
ANNA LENIHAN-KLEIN.

NEW YORK :

1882.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

WILLIAM JONES.

DAVID, his son.

BELLA, David's wife.

DANIEL HERBERT.

ANNA, his wife.

VICTORIA PEABODY, a widow, Anna's sister.

GEORGE WESTERN, a widower.

VIOLET, his ward.

ADELINA WEAVER, an old maid

HARRY CLIFTON.

LOUIS FRISER, a French hairdresser.

HANS ERNING, George Western's servant.

HILDA, Victoria Peabody's maid.

MARY STEEN, a nurse at Jones's.

TIME OF ACTION : THE PRESENT.



ACT I.

Parlor in Daniel Herbert's House.

Scene I. HILDA (arranging flowers on the table.)

What lovely flowers! A love gift of Mrs. Peabody's whimsical swain. Upon my life, my madam understands how to manage her admirers admirably. I'm not a fool; but she beats me all hollow.

Enter HANS. (Walks on tiptoe to Hilda and kisses her.)

Hilda. Good gracious! how you startled me! Why, Hans, what brings you here so early?

Hans. Let me firsh kiss your rosy cheeks and sherry lips.

Hilda. Hans, keep cool, I say.

Hans. Hilda, you will soon be mine vife. Vat shall I den keep cool for?

Hilda. Wait till I am your wife, and then you may—

Hans. And you call dat love?

Enter LOUIS; but when he sees Hans withdraws again.

Hilda, I dink you are false, and you don't love me.

Hilda. Tut, tut! Now don't fly out again. But what has brought you here so early?

Hans. Donnerwetter! Dat reminds me of mine master's orders to be in an hurry? You girls mix us poor fellows all up in de mind. Where is Mr. Herbert?

Hilda. In his study.

Hans. All right. I've no time to lose. I must go and see him. *(Exit.)*

Enter LOUIS.

Louis (puts his arm round Hilda's waist). I stole off to pay you court, chere Hilda.

Hilda. Ah, Mr. Louis! Have you finished my Madam's hairdressing?

Louis. Not quite; she will ring ze bell when she vant me to put ze finishing touch to her coiffure. But now I vant you to give ze finishing touch to our affairs. Hilda, vill you promise me to send zat clumsy, vulgar German to the right about and zen become mine vife?

Hilda. I assure you that you do me quite an honor, but—

Louis. Let us have no more buts and no evasions. See me here on mine knees. You vill drive me fou, mad, if you don't marry me. Next month I'll go to Paris and I'll take you vith me; I vill buy you beautiful silk trains, and introduce you to mine family. Vill you not see Paris?

Hilda. Paris! Oh, Louis, I'm yours. (*Aside.*) I'm sorry for poor Hans; but silk trains and Paris is too great a temptation.

Louis. And vill you name ze day, cherie?

Hilda. (*Aside.*) But Hans is a rough, out-poken fellow; the consequences may be awful.

Louis. (*Aside.*) She still seems to hesitate. (*Pulls a little package out of his pocket.*) Chère Hilda, I've here an leetle article which may please you. (*Gives her a ring.*)

Hilda. Oh, what a beautiful diamond ring! Oh, Louis, I thank you. (*Embraces Louis.*)

Enter HANS (dumbfounded).

Hans. Shock-shwerenoth!, Halloa, halloa, vat is all dis?

Hilda. Oh, nothing; only a little joke.

Hans. Now look here, Hilda, I don't like dese little jokes in mine future vife. Mr. Louis, be careful always to keep your paws off dis girl, because she is mine property; or you may get your bones broken.

Louis. Vulgar German. Dare you insult me?

Hans. Mr. Louis, you dink yourself an nice man, don't you?

Louis. All ze girls zink me a nice man.

Hans. Now, don't believe these lying girls. You are an disgusting chap, and if you vas mine related fader I'd dink mineself ashamed of you, for you are as ugly as sin.

Louis. Don't go on at such a rate or—

Hans. Vell, I won't dishpute dis point no longer vid you old parchment-faced Frenchman. Look in mine eyes,

Hilda, and answer me. But mind, no trifling girl. Do you want to marry me or dis old, gouty fellow?

Hilda. Now, Hans, keep cool and—

Hans. Stuff and humbug! Keep cool! Aha! you can't look in mine face, and your eyes have an queer twist. (*He takes both her hands and forces her to look in his face.*) Out vid it—tell me de trud! Have you changed your mind and vill not marry me, and den open an grocery store from bod our savings? Tell me, Hilda.

Hilda. What a fuss you make for such a worthless cause.

Hans. Vordless cause! Vell, den de matter is settled between us, as sure as I'm goin' to horsewhip dis drivellin old monkey of a Frenchman.

Hilda. Stop, Hans, or I'll scratch your eyes out!

Hans. You take de part of dis paltry, mean scoundrel?

Hilda. Don't be alarmed. I'll not marry in haste; I like to be free.

Hans. None of your gammon! It makes my blood curdle!

Louis. Ah, zis fellow's vulgarity vill spoil mine appetite for the whole day.

Hans. Spoil your appetite! I'm sure you'll eat like an cannibal. If you vaz an trifle younger and not ugly like an orang-outang—

Louis. Morbleu! Stop insulting me or—

Hans. Vell, you hideous animal, or—

Louis. You'll make me sick and I'll leave ze room.

Hans. To see you comfortable out of dis room dat's jist vat I wants! I'll have an mind to bundle you out and den talk ter you.

Louis. Vraiment! I never met viz such an vulgar monster!

Hans. You old hedgehog, you'll get enough of dat monster when it has drashed you to pieces. (*Bell rings.*)

Louis. You are too much beneaz me to bandy any more words wiz you. Dear Hilda, I must go to finish your Madam's coiffure. Au revoir! (*Kisses Hilda's hand and Exit.*)

Hans. Are you de girl dat vos to be mine vife?

Hilda. Let us make a bargain, Hans.

Hans. Girl, no more humbug! I tell you dat you are noding but a deceitful, crawling snake!

Hilda. Your vulgarity would never allow you to become a good husband for my superior taste.

Hans. After I've vorked at your Frenchman, he'll not be much to look at. I'll pull his old cork-screw nose.

Hilda. Don't scoff, you. (*Aside.*) Oh, I'll die of his brutality!

Hans. I'll make your hairdresser fly like a kite! Marry him, but vid your eyes shut. You ought to see dat gouty fellow vhen his vig comes off in de evening. Vell, he'll tuck you up. Good luck to de old monkey! Good luck! (*Exit*)

Hilda. His brutality is so outrageous that he well deserves to lose me! Oh, what a bother these men are!

Enter LOUIS.

Louis. Chere Hilda, je suis faché, very sorry zat vulgar fellow has outraged your feelings; but ve vill now be happy, my sweet love. (*Kisses Hilda.*)

Enter DAVID (just in time to see Louis kiss Hilda.)

David. Sorry to disturb you, but—

Louis. Excuse me, Monsieur, I'm off! My customers are vaiting for me. (*Exit.*)

David. (*Kisses Hilda.*) Hilda, I didn't think you were such a flirt.

Hilda. Sir, do not always rob me of my kisses.

David. Exchange is no robbery. What on earth is the meaning of all this? Do you know that I'm jealous of this Louis Friser!

Hilda. If I were you, sir, I wouldn't think of such a thing.

David. Oh, the duplicity of women! (*Kisses Hilda.*) I hope I'm not troublesome to you?

Hilda. Not at all; take whatever you please.

David. Don't you prefer my company to Monsieur Louis? Or has he cut me out?

Hilda. Not exactly that; but he is going to marry me.

David. Then I hope you'll soon get tired of him. Life would be charming with such a pretty pussy as you for a wife.

Hilda. (*Aside.*) Oh dear, if his wife found him out, he—

David. Why marry? Don't you prefer to make me happy?

Enter VICTORIA (but remains in the background).

Hilda. Monsieur Louis will take me to Paris, and he'll buy me plenty of silk trains.

David. I'll buy you plenty of silk trains too, my darling.

Hilda. Trains? Oh, yes; but where is the husband?

David. (*Kisses Hilda.*) My wife may die, we are all mortal. There's no fear of indiscretion.

Hilda. Mr. David, one can't help liking you.

David. Wouldn't you like to go to the theatre to-night, darling?

Hilda. No, I'm afraid—.

David. Now, Hilda, don't make a little fool of yourself. I'm sure you are not going to bill and coo only with your old Louis. Hilda, can my entreaties not persuade you?

Hilda. Mr. David, you are quite a lady-killer.

David. Yes, I'm very fond of killing that game.

Victoria. (*Aside.*) What a silly rattle. (*Coughs.*)

Hilda (*runs out of the room the moment she sees Victoria.*)

David. (*A little confused, then pulls a paper with lozenges out of his pocket.*) You have quite a cough, cousin. May I offer you some lozenges?

Victoria. (*Takes some.*) I thank you, my attentive cousin.

David. Let me kiss this matchless hand. (*Kisses Victoria's hand.*)

Victoria. What a clever diplomatist you are. I should like your wife to have overheard your conversation with my maid. Her gratification would be enormous.

David. I didn't think you were such a prude, cousin. Just a little chuck under the chin of a pretty girl—what fellow can resist that?

Victoria. Not you, I'm sure.

David. Cousin, you look so lovely, so enticing, this morning.

Victoria. Hush! hush!

David. Thank you for the hint.

Victoria. Let me caution you, cousin. Your frequent absence from your home may begin to arouse your wife's suspicion.

David. A poor fellow needs a holiday now and then to break the monotony of married life.

Victoria. Especially when this monotony is filled by cer-

tain brilliant female friends. Why don't you introduce them to your wife?

David. (*Coughs : Victoria offers him lozenges.*)

Victoria. May I offer you some lozenges for your troublesome cough?

David. (*Takes some.*) I thank you, my attentive cousin. (*Aside.*) I must conjure up all my powers of ingenuity to lull suspicions which she may possibly create in my wife's mind. (*Aloud.*) What do your allusions mean, Victoria?

Victoria. (*Has seated herself at the table and looks at some photographs.*) Mr. Western's country seat must offer specially attractive views. This view looks really charming. See, cousin.

David. I know of no more attractive views, save the one now before me. (*Bows deeply before Victoria.*)

Victoria. Are these the elegant, dashing manners which give you such an influence over my sex? But they really do not affect me.

David. Thank you for the hint. But confess, cousin, my wife seems to be particularly endowed by nature to bore her husband. A clever, gifted woman like you would produce a paragon of a husband.

Victoria. Your silly talk makes my veins tingle. You only want to throw me off my guard. Listen to me, cousin. You amuse yourself everywhere whilst your wife is moping at home. Your last vagaries I heard of have—

David. Are you going to betray me?

Victoria. I ought to, and likewise no longer permit you to outrage my feelings of justice. But under the present circumstances your wife's confidence in her rakish husband is the luckiest thing in the world. But such affairs cannot be kept dark forever. The last story you were the hero of may get noised about and—

David. Do your allusions refer to—

Victoria. The very person you have now in mind. Cousin, I have given you warning.

Enter HILDA.

Hilda. Mam, Mr. Western asks permission to see you.

David. I'm off. Dear Victoria, may I count on your generosity?

Victoria. Yes; but it is more than you deserve.

David. I promise to give up all these little follies, and I'll try to make myself worthy of your kindness. (*Kisses Victoria's hand; and in passing Hilda he chucks her under the chin and kisses her.*)

Hilda (*Aside.*) What elegance, what cleverness that man possesses.

Victoria. Hilda, if you value your place, let us have no more scenes like the one I witnessed a little while ago.

Hilda. Madam, I—

Victoria. Hush! Go and tell Mr. Western I'll be pleased to see him. (*Hilda exit.*)

Enter GEORGE.

Madam, I wish you good morning. I hope you will not think me an intruder that I have taken the liberty of calling on you so early.

Victoria. I am always pleased to see my kind neighbor at any time of the day.

George. I couldn't leave town, though even for a few days, without having seen you once more.

Victoria. My sister and I will regret the loss of a pleasant neighbor.

George. Merely as a neighbor you would regret me?

Victoria. And a friend.

George. And nothing more?

Victoria. That ought to satisfy your ambition.

George. I have only one ambition.

Victoria. And am I permitted to know the nature of it?

George. To be beloved by you is the chief ambition of my life. Victoria, what is the cause of your coolness? You made me believe that you requited my love.

Victoria. We may change our minds.

George. What one promises one must abide by.

Victoria. To the husband, yes, most certainly; but we must not permit these ideas to rule us when it is still time to dissolve a tie which has not yet become sacred.

George. Is our word not sacred?

Victoria. In all other affairs, save this, yes. Events, circumstances, may possibly effect a change in the minds of the lovers, and I would consider it against my conscience to put myself in a position which would be certain misery for both of us.

George. Victoria, this is a hazardous game we are playing. We must not allow our lover's quarrels to part us. Dearest, we are made for each other.

Vict. That is still a problem that the future must solve.

George. The problem is rather how can I convince you to trust and love me?

Vict. Trust! You did not even deign last night to tell me the pretty girl's name whose picture you treasure near your heart. Perhaps it is a talisman?

George. It is the likeness of my ward, Violet. Surely, you have no cause to be jealous of her.

Vict. You are right; how can there be jealousy where there is no love?

George. Dearest, you do not believe what you say, and—

Vict. Go, and forget me as if we had never met.

George. Obey you, I will not. Forget you, I could not. You are unable to resist a smile, in spite of your severity. Do you think I could hold aloof from the fascination with which you inspire me, could reason myself out of my admiration and love for you?

Vict. I can't tell, and I prefer not to guess.

George. Dearest, can nothing reconcile you?

Vict. Reconciliation presupposes still love and tenderness—

George. In our case these requisites surely exist. Pardon me, my life was tortured by my wife's jealous vagaries, and therefore I detest suspicion and jealousy to such a degree that—

Vict. Your wife's jealousy was quite a compliment to your attractions. And had she no cause for jealousy?

George. Surely not.

Victoria. Why did she then suspect you? It seems quite incredible.

George. So it seems, indeed.

Victoria. And is this the only cause of your aversion to jealousy?

George. It is. I think jealousy degrades us from our dignity and lowers us in the eyes of the world.

Victoria. There is a natural and noble jealousy which is born of sincere love and of which I approve; but love born of jealousy I despise; it is only wounded pride and a passing fancy. I'm not quite sure whether your love be but a caprice, which may last only a short time, and that the

slightest betrayal of jealousy on my side may rouse your contempt and—

George. You are well known by your friends as the wisest and gentlest of women, and I do not think that you could be suspicious like the rest of your sex.

Vict. Do not exalt my character too highly; I may prove unworthy of your good opinion.

George. Be assured my ineffable faith in you can never shake. I know now that you have taught me the true meaning of love. I have insisted on penetrating into your privacy to ask your pardon for my last night's unaccountable behavior.

Vict. (Aside.) There is sincerity in his tone that thrills through my heart.

Enter HILDA.

Hilda. Mam, here is a letter for you. (*Exit.*)

Vict. Sir, will you be kind enough to permit me to peruse this letter?

George. You would oblige me by it.

Vict. (Opens the letter, and a photograph drops out of it to the floor.)

George. (Picks it up and looks at it.) You made some fresh artistic acquisition. Quite a fine looking young fellow, Who is he?

Vict. A dear and devoted friend of mine.

George. And your admirer too?

Vict. He is too young to be the admirer of a sedate widow.

George. You are still very lovely and may rouse admiration in any man's heart.

Vict. There are plenty of young girls who covet this young friend of mine for a husband. And they are right; he is an admirable young man.

George. This admirable young fellow may not care for buds—prefer a full blown rose.

Vict. (Hands to George the photograph.) Look at him. Does not a gentle heart, frankness, and truth speak out of his eyes?

George. Don't be guided in your judgment of characters by the expression of peoples' eyes.

Vict. I cannot avail myself of your advice. My judg-

ment in regard to expression of eyes has never as yet deceived me.

George. Quite a pathetic inscription : "To the guardian angel of my life. With my love and devotion." He seems to be an admirer or lover of yours after all.

Vict. Mr. Western, our acquaintance is of too short a standing to make you a confident of my private affairs.

George. Ah, you trifle with me and have deceived me.

Vict. You wrong *me* now by your suspicion.

George. I do not suspect you ; but I begin to have my scruples.

Vict. Try to reason yourself out of these scruples. We are both sedate and quiet people and—

George. And you accept this picture and approve of its inscription ?

Vict. I accept it and fully approve of its inscription, and will place it near my heart, as you did the likeness of your ward.

George. I confess that exceeds my expectations. I can now fully understand your motive to dissolve the tie between us.

Vict. Really, one should judge by your conduct that you were jealous.

George. Oh, woman, woman ! What shall I say ?

Vict. The less you say the better.

George. And is this the result of our happy dream of the future ? Oh, I'll die of this unexpected blow !

Vict. That would be too great a loss for the world, and therefore I'll rid you of my presence.

George. Then you are determined to give me no explanation ?

Vict. I regret that I cannot alter my determination.

George. Stay one moment, Madam. What is this man to you ?

Vict. My dearest and most devoted friend. Your questions are very strange, and your manner is still stranger. You look at me with an air of doubt and suspicion, and on serious reflection I begin to understand that you doubt my word.

George. Your remarks are most original, considering the predicament I'm in. Pray, proceed.

Vict. I do not choose to divulge my position toward this young friend of mine to your suspicious mind.

George. Further concealment would be out of place.

Vict. A few minutes ago you assured me of your ineffable faith in me; but it appears that your suspicion has already considerably shaken this ineffable faith.

George. But permit me to explain—

Vict. You doubt my word, and therefore I don't desire any further explanation. (*Exit.*)

George. I looked at her with close scrutiny; but she met my gaze unmoved. Ah, woman is forever a problem that men cannot solve! (*Throws himself in a big arm-chair in the background.*)

Enter DAVID and DANIEL.

Dan. I tell you, David, this will never do. For your wife's sake I helped you out of this scrape; but I'll never do so again.

David. Where did you hide the overcoat?

Dan. I threw it into the closet where I keep my papers.

David. And where is the letter you took from my coat pocket?

Dan. I placed it where I found it.

David. Why that is a piece of confounded stupidity.

Dan. My wife was just entering my study and therefore—

David. Well, let's have no more fuss about it.

Dan. David, you must give up your vagaries. Like most worldly pleasures an unwise indulgence in them may bring its penalty for you.

David. It's heart-rending! Your preaching brings tears to my eyes! Oh, Dan, what a sly hypocrite you are!

Dan. I think it an unpardonable guilt to dupe a wife so true and confiding as Bella.

David. Well, yes, she is a dear little woman; but these constant matrimonial affections begin to pall on a poor fellow. Too much sweets spoil the taste. Home is only an asylum fit for the old and sick; now it fills me with ennui and satiety. Can I help it that I am not made of marble? I'm pretty sure that you were an old sinner yourself and have plenty of old flames in this city.

Dan. The justice of your allusion to old flames I can't dispute. Before I was married I confess myself guilty of little follies and flirtations, like the rest of the fellows, and I know how sweet it is to snatch a kiss from a girl's rosy lips.

I make excuse for the hot blood and unthinking errors of young years—they are no crimes. But when a man is married, and has a young wife of his own choice, whose heart beats for him in true love, and this man still continues to seek new prey for his passions and goes on weaving lies on lies to deceive his wife, then I'm inclined to call him a prerobate.

David. You view these little indiscretions pretty queer in this enlightened and frivolous age. (*Western comes forward.*)

Dan. Ah, good morning, Mr. Western. We were not aware of—

George. Mr. Herbert can we not persuade you to join our hunting party?

Dan. You do me too much honor; but I'm forced to refuse your kind invitation. I have promised to escort my wife and Mrs Peabody to the theatre to-night

David. I'll be ready in half an hour, and I'm anticipating a very pleasant time. You know I'm an inveterate sportsman.

George. I'm indebted to my good fortune in having secured such a charming companion as Mr. Jones. Gentlemen, I bid you a good morning. (*Exit*)

Enter BELLA.

Bella. Good morning, Mr. Herbert. I slipped out of doors in my morning gown to see whether I have guessed right to find my dear Davy here. It is so convenient to live next door to our best friends.

David. (*Aside*) I'm just making up my mind to move out

Herbert Excuse me, I'll inform my wife of your presence. (*Exit.*)

Bella. My own Davy, you have not yet given me one kiss this morning.

David Pray, Bella, don't play the little fool You know I don't like these demonstrations of love in a strange house.

Bella. My darling, let me put these flowers in your button-hole. (*Puts them in.*)

David Be as affectionate as you like at the proper time, but not always

Bella. David, you don't love me any more.

David. 'Gad, I do love you dearly ; but this constant billing and cooing of married people is ridiculous ; it belongs only to the period of courtship.

Bella. Before we were married all your attentions were given to me.

David. Bella, you know that a scene annoys me excessively.

Bella. But now you are quite changed ; though my attentions are still given to you.

David. A wife's attentions belong to her husband.

Bella. Your clubs, your hunting parties engross you too much

David. Foolish little pussy ! Do you think I value any pleasure without you by my side ? But I've duties to fulfil to my station and my numerous friends

Bella. You were in the habit of never going out or coming in without giving me a kiss ; but of late you never—

David. Let's take matters easy ! Dear Bella, I'll give you all the kisses you want as soon as I'll return from my hunting party.

Enter VICTORIA.

Bella. How cruel to leave me all alone for at least a week.

David. Bella, don't cry like a baby. (*Aside.*) Confound it !

Vict. I don't believe that marriages are made in heaven.

David. Why do you object to that old adage, cousin ?

Vict. Because it is utterly devoid of sense.

David. I'm sorry that for the present I have to deny myself the pleasure of profiting by the opportunity to admire your wit and sparkling repartee. I have to leave in half an hour for Mr. Western's country seat, and so I hope you will kindly excuse me. Ladies, I bid you a good morning. (*Exit.*)

Bella. Pardon my hurry, Victoria ; but I must go and see my Davy off. (*Exit.*)

Enter ANNA and DANIEL.

Anna. (*Weeping.*) Let me know everything. Give me the name of the woman who robbed me of my husband's love, and I'll pardon you.

Dan. Seriously, I wish I could give you the name of the

woman who wrote that letter you found in my coat pocket, but it isn't in my power. As to my love, you may rest assured, dear wife, no woman has robbed you of it.

Anna. Oh, what a web of lies! One must be blind not to see something behind all that.

Dan. Anna, come here and look in your old husband's face; do you think he could tell you anything but the truth?

Anna. Dan, have you no confession to make? Do tell me and—

Dan. I'll tell you nothing. I'm inflexible. Anna, I thought you so confiding, so good.

Anna. Do you imagine a wife can receive a blow like this and not get roused to passion and indignation?

Dan. It would be more becoming in you to receive the protestations of my innocence more calmly and trustingly.

Anna. Oh, sister, what shall I believe?

Vict. Candidly, this does not sound like guilt. Well, really, I believe him. But you would be no woman had you not conceived a pang of jealousy.

Dan. She might have doubted appearances, but she should no longer doubt the word of her husband who has proved to her his loyalty for twenty years. (*Exit.*)

Anna. Ah, that jealousy and suspicion must come to torture me after twenty years of happiness and trust!

Vict. Twenty years ought to have given you evidence of your husband's loyalty, according to his own saying.

Anna. Is this letter I found in his coat pocket no evidence to the contrary? Listen to me. (*Reads the letter.*) To my dear Deechy Datchy. What a preposterous name! But there can be no doubt that this silly address is meant to be a pet name for Daniel. Deechy Datchy, it is too foolish! (*Continues to read.*) Many thanks for the beautiful bracelet. I shall wear it to-night in honor of our little supper. Be careful of the spying cat, or she may catch your

LOVING LITTLE WHITE MOUSE.

What a silly and treacherous woman the writer of these lines must be! I wish I were a cat and could bite this little white mouse's head off!

Vict. Give your husband time and he'll soon explain the real meaning of that silly letter to your full satisfaction.

Anna. You never missed an opportunity of expressing your merriment on account of my firm belief in my husband's virtue, and now you take his part.

Vict. I have always admired you for the implicit faith you had in your worthy husband. But now you confirm me in my belief that women are but weak creatures after all.

Enter BELLA.

Bella. Oh, I'm all prostrate with grief!

Vict. What is the cause of that grief, little woman!

Bella. David wouldn't even permit me to accompany him to the railway depot. He said I would only make a little fool of myself by crying like a child.

Vict. No reasonable woman should grieve for such a trifle. Pray, be seated child. (*Aside.*) Poor victim!

Enter DANIEL (With a satchel in his hand; he walks quickly across the stage and exit.)

Anna. He went off with his satchel in his hand. Oh, sister, what do you think he is going to do?

Bella. He sent word to my husband that he had change his mind, and would join Mr. Western's hunting party.

Anna. His conduct grows worse and worse.

Bella. Mrs. Herbert, I'm missing my husband's dark summer overcoat. He must have left it in your husband's study last night.

Anna. Heaven have mercy on me! Your husband's overcoat! Oh, my poor, injured, darling husband!

Bella. How am I to understand your emotion, Mrs. Herbert?

Vict. My sister is a little out of humor this morning. Don't mind her. (*To Anna.*) Have pity on the poor child! Compose yourself.

Enter HILDA.

Hilda. Madam, there are the carriages. The gentlemen will be off in a minute. (*They all rush to the window.*)

Vict. Be careful! Don't let them see you.

Bella. Look, Victoria! Mr. Western seats himself with a nice young girl all alone in one carriage.

Vict. (Aside.) That girl is the original of the likeness which he keeps like a talisman near his heart.

Bella. Mr. Herbert seats himself with a lady, too, in a carriage.

Anna. He does that only to punish me for my base jealousy.

Bella. My good Davy behaves like a real good boy; he seats himself with a gentleman. He don't care for ladies.

Vict. (*Aside.*) Ignorance is bliss! (*Aloud.*) You are right; he only cares for his dear little wife. (*Aside.*) I hope she'll never see him in his true light.

Bella. I wonder who these ladies may be? The younger lady's face appeared to me quite a familiar one.

Hilda. They arrived this morning by the express train. The old lady is a cousin, and the young one the ward of Mr. Western.

Vict. An idea strikes me! Let's resort to something extraordinary. We'll go to Mr. Western's country seat, too, and surprise them.

Bella. That would be glorious fun!

Anna. But under what pretext shall we approach them?

Vict. Under the pretext of a joke.

Anna. But they may think it odd and singular that—

Vict. The singularity of this surprise can only be most flattering to them.

Bella. Oh, dear Mrs Herbert, let's go. Our husbands would be delighted to see us, and we may anticipate a delightful afternoon.

Vict. Hilda, you told me once that you knew the way to Mr. Western's country seat?

Hilda. In fact, Ma'm, I do. The steamer that leaves here in forty-five minutes will take you there in three hours; and when it lands you follow the path till—

Vict. I want you to accompany us. Let's get ready as soon as we possibly can.

Enter HARRY (with a satchel in his hand.)

Hilda. Oh, Ma'm, there is Mr. Clifton! (*They all welcome him and shake hands.*)

Vict. My dearest Harry, be welcome! Your two years' absence has made quite a fine man of you.

Harry. My dearest friend, you too look lovelier than ever. Did you receive my letter and the photograph I enclosed in it?

Vict. Yes, I did. Your photograph is a good one; but

you look twice as nice. But time presses Harry, are you too tired to escort us on a little steamboat trip?

Harry. Not in the least; I feel as fresh as a lark.

Vict. Well, then, go to your room and make yourself as comfortable as possible till our departure. We must make our toilets, and so you must excuse us. (*All exunt except Hilda.*)

Enter HANS.

Hilda. (*Aside.*) My gracious, it is Hans! I wonder what brings *him* here.

Hans. Can I see Mrs. Herbert?

Hilda. Not now; she is making her toilet.

Hans. Vell, den go and tell her dat her husband vill not come home to-night, and dat he vent for an hunting on my master's grounds.

Hilda. She knows it already.

Hans. Vell, den, all right. (*Wants to walk off.*)

Hilda. Hans, you needn't walk off like a bear. We may remain friends after all.

Hans. After you vas so blazing cold to me, poor fellow, you vants to get sweet again, eh? Has dat old Frenchman jilted you, perhaps, and yo vants to slide over to me again?

Hilda. Hans, try to be a little more civilized. Mr. Louis will take me to Paris, and introduce me to his family. To see that lovely Paris has always been the craze of my life.

Hans. I knows dere vas a craze of someding in your foolish head. Vell, I must go, or I'll miss de steamer.

Hilda. Are you going to Mr. Western's country seat, too?

Hans. Vell, of course, how could mine master pull along widout me?

Hilda. Hans, can you keep a secret?

Hans. Vell, I dinks so.

Hilda. My Madam, and Mrs. Herbert, and Mrs. Jones, and I, will leave here with the steamer, too, in order to surprise the gentlemen in the midst of their fun.

Hans. Vell, vell, vell, vell!

Hilda. You don't seem to be very much taken by that idea. Hans, say something--don't look like a sheep!

Hans. Vell, when I looks like an sheep, you looks like an goose. Vhat are you womens comin to surprise de men folks for? Can't you never keep at home like decent people?

Hilda. We are free born American women, and—

Hans. Now, shtop. Vas you born in America as a free born woman too?

Hilda. Certainly, I was.

Hans. Dat's an damn lie!

Hilda. Vulgar fellow, don't swear; it makes my flesh creep.

Hans. Now, look you here, girl, I shvear as much as I wants; and for making your flesh creep, I don't care. You vas born in an little village in Shermamy, and you vas tending de geese in de fields. You vas already twelve years when you comes to dis country.

Hilda. You tell nothing but lies. I'm a free born American, and pride myself of its great nation.

Hans. Vell, vell, dat great nation has no cause to pride itself of you cranky girl. I finds dat all de good-for-noding people pride demselves of deir nations. Donnerwetter Shockshwerenoth! vhy don't dey be good and brave and give the nations a chance to pride demselves of dem? When you go to Paris you will soon pride yourself to be a Frenchwoman—eh, won't yer?

Hilda. No such thing will come to me. The Americans are now the rage in Europe, and—

Hans. Vell, boder your trash; I must go or I'll—
(*Bell rings.*)

Hilda. That's my madam's bell. Good bye Hans, I hope we'll soon meet again on the steamer. (*Exit.*)

Hans. Dat I knows for certain dat no good vind vill blow all dese vomen folks to mine master's place. To a dead certainty dey'll spoil all the men's sport and fun. Dat is true, dat Hilda is an shmart girl; but I'm glad dat old Frenchman tooks her off mine hands. She is too shmart for me, quiet fellow. She'd make me feel as ven I vas a sittin all de time on a barrel of gunpowder; and I likes to drink mine glass of beer and shmokes mine pipe in peace.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

Garden of George Western's country seat.

Scene I. BELLA. VIOLET.

Violet. My dear Bella, this is indeed a happy surprise.

Bella. To find you here, my dear Violet, after a separation of four years, has given me too unexpected joy.

Violet. They used to call us the inseparables at school.

Bella. When I saw you enter the carriage this morning I was struck by your face; but I did not recognize you.

Violet. We have both changed since we parted.

Bella. The gentlemen are not yet aware of our presence here; they are out for a ride. How are you enjoying yourself in their company.

Violet. Not the least bit. Among my guardian's guests there is an impudent fellow who annoyed me very much by his attentions in Canada last year. And now he begins to importune me again. Look, there he is. (*Points to the wing.*)

Bella. That man who is just now conversing with Mr. Western? (*Seizing Violet's arm.*)

Violet. He is the very man. Don't you dislike him at first sight? What's the matter? You look like a statue! Oh, you press my arm like in a vise! What is it, Bella?

Bella. That man is my sister's husband. Will you oblige me by letting him once more address you whilst I listen to his perfidy?

Violet. Though I loathe this impudent man, I'll nevertheless comply with your request.

Bella. Thanks, dear Violet. He wends his steps in this direction. I must hide myself. (*Exit.*)

Enter DAVID.

David. (*Aside.*) Now for a tete-a-tete with my lovely enchanter. (*Aloud.*) May I propose a little ramble in these nice grounds.

Violet. I thank you, sir, but I must decline your offer. I am fatigued and prefer to rest myself.

David. Little fairy, for the second time fate has thrown us together. You are like a wind-tossed rose in my path

Violet. Take care, sir! A rose has thorns and they might wound you.

David. The attraction is too irresistible to consider such a danger. As the magnet attracts iron, likewise—

Violet. What lovely views this country-seat of my guardian possesses. Do they not charm you too?

David. They cannot be compared to the exquisite view now before me. Such a marvel of nature and beauty.

Violet. Sir, do you not feel remorse for your duplicity?

David. What am I to understand by your insinuation?

Violet. Did you not propose to me under something like false pretences?

David. (*Aside.*) Propose? Does the little fool think I made her an offer of marriage? (*Aloud.*) How can you be so cruel to suspect me?

Violet. Were your intentions then really of a pure nature when you told me—

David. That I adore and love you? Most certainly. See me here on my knees and let me repeat my protestations of my passion and love for you.

Violet. And would you consent to a separation from your wife, if I requite your feelings?

David. (*Aside.*) Confound it! What does she know about my wife.

Violet. You hesitate—

David. If you command a separation—yes!

Violet. Rise, sir! I can only reject your vile offer with the scorn and contempt it merits. (*Exit.*)

Enter BELLA, and VICTORIA appears in the background listening.

Bella. So you desire a separation, sir?

David. (*Aside.*) Earth swallow me! What shall I say to her?! (*Aloud.*) Dear Bella, the whole affair was nothing but a joke.

Bella. Sir, do not aggravate your baseness by further deception.

David. Dearest little pussy, men talk a good deal to girls without meaning anything.

Bella. Sir, your conduct has filled me with immeasurable contempt.

David. Did I ever see a woman like you! Now, if I allow myself to get angry—

Bella. You have from this moment forfeited all your rights over me. For our child's sake let the world remain unconscious of our relations to each other in the future; but let me assure you that you have lost forever my trust, my love, and my esteem. (*Exit.*)

David. Did I ever imagine that she could talk to me like that! She, who seemed to be the personification of gentleness and affection.

Vict. The very worm will turn if you tread on it.

David. You here, too. I had a suspicion that you were at the bottom of this mischief.

Vict. You are caught at last. What do you propose to do now?

David. I must give her time to cool down. Time has a wonderfully soothing effect in these cases.

Vict. And do you not feel humiliated?

David. I can't say that I experience any such emotion.

Vict. Then let me at least hope that it does not amuse you.

David. No, on the contrary. Oh, what we poor married men have to suffer in this world! If there were not the promise of a second life, we should be driven to suicide.

Vict. The father of lies would be charmed to receive his worthy son. And I advise you to commit suicide as soon as possible.

David. Pray, don't make me an object of your censure and sarcasm.

Vict. You have such a young and excellent wife, why don't you love her?

David. I do love her dearly.

Vict. Why do you then deceive her?

David. Why, why! Can it be expressed why? That seems to be the very mystery of a married man's nature.

Vict. Let us hope not of all married men, and that flirting is a particular shortcoming of my dear cousin David.

David. Your sex has irresistible attractions for us poor fellows. Dear cousin, you look really lovely to-day. I wonder where I had my eyes not to ask you to become my wife when—

Vict. You are incorrigible, and I'm sorry that you are not

only a rake but deficient of heart. The scene I witnessed ought to have put you in a more serious mood.

David. What shall I do? Run after her like a madman, and throw myself on her mercy?

Vict. That would be a very kind and just proceeding.

David. On the contrary—it would be the most tremendous blunder a man could make under the matrimonial yoke. A pretty mess she would make of it! Torture me to death! I would never hear the end of it!

Vict. It seems you have no notion that you do not act and talk foolishly but basely.

David. For heaven's sake don't preach! Spare me! As if men were not all alike.

Vict. No, my dear Deechy Datchy, they are not all alike.

David. (*Aside.*) Thunder! Now I am in for it! (*Aloud.*) Madam, it seems you don't know me well enough to—

Vict. I know you but too well, and can't judge you as flatteringly as your "loving little white mouse." Pardon this absurd quotation for the sake of truth. (*Bows mockingly and then exit.*)

David. How shall I ever get out of this scrape! That wretched Dan has broken his promise and has betrayed me. Oh, if I only knew where to find him! For an hour we have been trying to hunt him up, but our efforts have been all in vain. If that confounded story about that Deechy Datchy and that white little mouse gets once noised about among my friends and these tattling women there will be no end of teasing and tittering. But I must renew my search for that vile Dan and give him a good blowing up. (*Exit*)

Enter VICTORIA and BELLA.

Vict. Your face burns and you shrink from your husband, little one. You must forgive him.

Bella. Oh, never, never! I loved him and esteemed him, but now—

Vict. All men will commit little indiscretions. Sorely as your husband has wounded your feelings, I hope that you, nevertheless, still love him.

Bella. Wretched woman as I may appear to you, I do love him still! But I feel so weary and unhappy! I wish I were dead!

Vict. And your child, cruel mother?

Bella. Ah, my child! Heaven forgive me!

Vict. Can your husband's guilt annul the tie between the mother of his child? He has a good and generous heart after all, and you must forgive him; but, nevertheless, punish him.

Bella. I am so unhappy. Dearest Victoria, I have no one but you.

Vict. Hush, darling! You have not only me, but many friends, and before all, your child; and if you be willing to avail yourself of my advice, in a little while a loving and devoted husband too.

Bella. Dear friend, you shall teach me to resemble you, and—

Vict. There is no necessity to resemble me; but I love you, and will therefore teach you to spoil your husband's taste for forbidden fruit. An innocent stratagem is allowed in love and war. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter DAVID and ANNA.

David. Pray try to be a little reasonable, cousin Anna. How should I know where your foolish husband has poked himself away? I shouldn't be at all surprised if he has run away with that old Miss Weaver, on whom he was uncommonly sweet at the dinner table

Anna. Like all profligates, you suspect every one. For all this misery I'm indebted to you.

David. To me? What an unjust idea!

Anna. Not in the least unjust. I'll have it out with you by and by, "Mr Deechy Datchy;" and the cat will surely bite your "loving little white mouse's" head off.

David. (*Aside*) She knows all about that confounded letter, too. Oh, just let me find that faithless Dan

Anna. But I'll not waste my time any longer in talking to a reckless fellow like you. I'll go and rouse all the people of the nearest village to search for my poor husband. Oh, I'm afraid I shall go crazy! (*Exit.*)

David. Crazy! Well, I think she is already as crazy as a March hare, to make such a fuss about that stupid, faithless fellow. I shouldn't wonder if that rogue got conscience stricken and drowned himself; but if he be vile enough to be still among the living, just let me catch him. (*Exit.*)

Enter VICTORIA and GEORGE.

George. Some good genius must have worked in my behalf to send you here.

Vict. On the contrary, some evil genius, who has sown discord between two loving hearts, was the cause of it. My sister had given way to a little weakness of her sex, and her husband, taking offence at it, has left her in a huff.

George. I must confess Mr. Herbert's sudden change of mind quite surprised me.

Vict. His wife begins to conjure up the most dreadful things on account of his disappearance. Can you account for it, Mr. Western?

George. Indeed I can not.

Vict. My poor sister being now well aware of her error, is very eager to ask her husband's pardon.

George. And if some one else were aware of his crime, to have doubted the most excellent of women, could you pardon the poor wretch, too, if he were to throw himself at your mercy?

Vict. How can I injure what lies defenceless in my power?

George. Heaven bless you, dearest. Henceforth my whole life shall prove to you that you have not pardoned an unworthy man.

Enter ANNA.

Anna. Oh, my head is all on fire! Nobody can find the slightest trace of my husband. Oh, what misery is in store for me!

Vict. Compose yourself, dear sister.

Anna. I cannot stay here a minute longer. Oh, my darling husband, where are you? (*Exit.*)

Vict. Come, let us follow. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter HANS and HILDA.

Hilda. And you could not find Mr. Herbert either?

Hans. No, I searched everywhere, but could not find him. What reason dat old man had to run away I'd like ter know?

Hilda. There are a great many among which one may choose. The old man had a little tiff with his wife and—

Hans. Vell, dat's de ding! Vomens are always a driving us poor fellows vid der tiffs and fights to our doom. (*Hans sneezes.*)

Hilda. I hope you haven't caught cold?

Hans. Why?

Hilda. Sneezing, they say, is always a sign of having caught cold.

Hans. No vonder ven I catched cold. You has tumbled me out of hot vater into cold vater, and out of cold vater into hot vater at a pretty smart rate to-day, to make a poor chap catch cold.

Hilda. Were not the gentlemen delighted to see their ladies so unexpectedly?

Hans. I don't know vhy for. Dey shpoil all der fun and dey have now to do noding but to dance attendance on dem like poodles.

Hilda. If Mr. Herbert knew that his wife were here he would be very much pleased and—

Hans. I'm not so sure of dat. After dinner I seed him leave de room vid his face red like an lobster, and den seed him pull out an handkerchief vid vich he firsht viped his face and den tied it round his head, and den he begins to groan and moan like an pitiable creature.

Hilda. Hans, you frighten me! I'll go instantly to Mrs. Herbert and tell her all about it. The poor woman, the poor woman! (*Exit.*)

Hans. Dat serves dat poor voman right! Vhy did she fight vit dat poor old man. He has for sure drowned himself. I'll go to de pond and try to fish out his poor corpse. (*Exit.*)

Enter GEORGE and VIOLET.

George. My darling, what causes you to shed tears?

Violet. Oh, dear guardian, I am very unhappy.

George. Will you not confide the cause of your grief to me, your truest friend?

Violet. The young man who escorted your lady friends to this place is the same who contrived to win my love when I met him two months ago in Canada, and now he has cruelly deceived me.

George. Do you mean Harry Clifton?

Violet. Yes, I overheard a conversation between him and Mrs. Peabody in the conservatory. He kissed her hands and swore eternal love and devotion to her. What is the matter, dear guardian? What ails you?

George. Nothing ails me. I feel nothing but compassion for you and a desire to help you. So your faithless lover pledged his love to Mrs. Peabody and she accepted it?

Violet Most rapturously; she kissed him and called him by the most endearing names. Oh, there she comes! I hate that woman and cannot endure her presence. (*Exit.*)

Enter VICTORIA.

Vict. Dear George, did you get any news concerning my brother-in-law?

George. Madam, you said this morning that events, circumstances, may possibly effect a change in the lover's minds, and that you would consider it against your conscience to keep yourself bound to a promise you knew you could not faithfully fulfill; and now I'll take you at your word—

Vict. As a rule people detest to be taken at their word.

George. Madam, though it will make my life miserable and valueless, I'll release you from your promise to become my wife.

Vict. This sounds as if you were speaking in earnest.

George. I am bitterly in earnest.

Vict. Explain yourself more clearly.

George. Discretion and delicacy do not permit me to speak frankly with you. What I suspected, feared—

Vict. What you suspected, feared! I can absolutely make nothing of your extraordinary remarks—

George. Your conscience can tell you all that you pretend not to know.

Vict. As you really appear to be in earnest, your suspicion rather saddens than surprises me.

George. Who was ever more trusting than I? Let a man be as faithful as he will, and devoted even to madness, he shall be deceived for another, who is the veriest rake of the world.

Vict. So you doubt my love and faith for you?

George. Love! Faith! That is endlessly to crave what you cannot give. Like other women you see in men only your prey.

Vict. George, listen to me—

George. Madam, let me pass.

Vict. Pass, sir, I will not hold you. (*George exit.*)

Enter ANNA.

Anna. Victoria, I am fairly wild with grief. I have given up all hope of seeing my poor husband, whom I have wronged so cruelly, again in this world.

Vict. Let us not lose all hope. We'll telegraph to the city for a detective and—

Anna. Come, let us do it instantly. Come! (*Exeunt.*)

Enter HARRY and GEORGE.

George. You do not want for assurance, young man.

Harry. I love Violet and would cherish her in my heart.

George. Your hand is not pure enough to touch hers. I'm responsible for my ward's honor, and—

Harry. Violet's honor is as dear to me as my own

George. And what is the honor of Mrs. Peabody to you?

Harry. My love and veneration for her lies too high to be gauged by mortal eyes.

George. Sir, your infamous duplicity is beyond limit. Don't try to blind and hoodwink me with your pretended veneration for that treacherous woman, who has so basely deceived me.

Harry. Persist in accusing the noblest and truest of women, and you shall answer for it.

George. Challenge me! Then I'll seize the opportunity to kill you like a venomous reptile.

Harry. Sir, what do you really reproach me for?

George. Your conscience ought to tell you that you are a libertine. Violet overheard your conversation with Mrs. Peabody in the conservatory, and informed me that my affianced wife accepted you as her lover.

Harry. Do not judge the tie between me and your future wife by appearances. I feel nothing but a boundless gratitude for her.

George. I must confess that it begins to pique my curiosity to know the cause of your boundless gratitude to Mrs. Peabody.

Harry. Permit me to make you acquainted with that cause. As Violet's guardian you have a right to know my sad past.

George. I am listening, sir.

Harry. When I was only a seven years' old sickly child I had not a soul in the world that cared for me. My parents were dead, and I lived with an old blind aunt, whom I used to

lead around the streets to help her beg for charity. One day we had not been able to get a cent or a morsel of food, and we had had insufficient for many previous days. When we entered our wretched home my aunt fell senseless to the floor. I ran for help; but it could do her no good—she was dead. I felt terrified and rushed out of the abode of death into the street. The night wore on, and it grew bitter cold and the snow flakes fell thick and fast. I was shaking all over with cold, and my misery was great. I had been aimlessly wandering about, and, tired to death, I sat down on the stoop of a private house. Bursts of music coming from the interior of a neighboring mansion struck like a knife into my aching heart. I sobbed as though my heart would break, but the passers by did not pay any attention to the poor wee child. I had thrown myself face downward, on the steps, when of a sudden a rough voice spoke to me: "Move on boy, or I'll take you to the station house." I was unable to obey this command; though benumbed by cold I was not unconscious. Then a door opened, and I heard a woman's voice say: "Policeman, what is the matter with that poor boy?" "I can't tell, Ma'm," he answered, "the boy seems to be sick," I never well knew how, but I was lifted in a woman's arms and carried into a room where I was placed on a lounge. The warm atmosphere of the room made my blood circulate with renewed vigor. I stared upward, but neither moved nor uttered a word; the lights and my benefactress's face blended dizzily in my eyes, and I looked on in a sort of wonder. The lady watched me pitifully, and, stroking my matted hair, said: "Poor boy, he shivers; he is nearly frozen to death." The soft cadence of her words brought to my heart calm and consolation, and hot tears rushed under my swollen lids, which she wiped softly away. She told me afterwards that there was an unconscious appeal in my eyes, which touched her to the heart. She wore a bunch of violets on her breast, and to this day the fragrance of these sweet flowers bring to my memory that never to be forgotten night and moves my soul with deep emotion. From that night she has taken care of me. I would have served her as a slave, but she did not accept my service. She reared me as her own child, and has made an honest and useful man of the desolate and starving boy.

George. And the name of this noble woman—

Harry. Is Victoria Peabody.

George. Heaven forgive me, that I ever doubted her purity, her innocence !

Harry. Her warmth of sympathy, the sweetness of her temper, is great.

George. Sir, I dare not ask your pardon for my vile suspicion. If you care for vengeance, you have your wish, for I am wretchedly unhappy ! I have wronged the truest of women too basely to hope for forgiveness.

Enter HANS.

Hans. Master, dis is awful. I couldn't find de body in de pond, and den I goes to de voods and dere I finds an man hanging on de tree Oh, Master, I fears it is Mr. Herbert, and I runs straightvay home to tell you.

George. This is dreadful ! Mr. Clifton, let us mount our horses and hurry to the place of disaster. Hans, you must stay here and take care that Mrs. Herbert does not hear about this fatal news. Come, sir. (*George and Harry exeunt*)

Hans. I knows dat poor old man vas going ter hang himself ; but it's awful, awful !

Enter ANNA.

Anna. Hilda informed me, a few minutes ago, that you saw my husband tie a handkerchief round his head and then heard him sigh.

Hans. Sigh ! Vell, Mam, he didn't only sigh, but I hears him groaning and moaning like a man in an awful bad fix.

Anna. Oh, heaven, have mercy on me ! And where did you see him last ?

Hans (*shuddering*). Oh, Mam, shpare me dat ! I begs of you I couldn't tell you dat awful sight I seed him in ; not to save mine life !

Anna. Man, don't torture me—speak, or I'll go mad !

Hans. (*Aside.*) Vell, I better tells her : she must know it anyhow. (*Aloud*) Vell, don't get vorked up too much about vhat I have to tell you, Mam.

Anna. Speak, speak !

Hans. Vell, your husband has—no I can't tell you, Mam, it's too awful !

Anna. Oh, that man will drive me mad ! Speak !

Hans. (*Aside.*) Perhaps she go and kill herself like de old man, and so I better tells her. (*Aloud.*) Vell, your

poor husband—on a tree in de voods—he has hanged himself.

Anna (utters piercing shrieks and rushes off.)

Hans. I must go and vach dat poor voman, or she'll kill herself too. (*Exit.*)

Enter DANIEL (with a handkerchief tied round his head.)

Dan. The dinner of my friend Western was excellent, and to my misfortune his champagne was more so. I indulged against my usual habit, too freely in it. When I left the table I felt a sudden and queer sensation of a rolling in my head, and these ominous symptoms began to scare me. I tied this handkerchief round my aching head and rushed off to the stable, and therein ascended to the hay-loft to sleep off undisturbed that queer dizziness of my head. I feel better now; though my head is not yet quite the thing. I'll try to keep aloof from my pleasant companions, and before all, from old Miss Weaver. 'Gad, when the champagne went to my head I began to blabb out all my recent little domestic troubles, and made a regular fool of myself. This appears to be a quiet place, and I'll try a cigar; it may improve my head. (*Lights a cigar.*) Ah, there is nothing like a good cigar and a quiet home!

Enter HANS.

Hans. Dat poor voman takes on awful. Vell, de womens has taken a hold of her, and I'll rest mineself now a little from dat hunting after dat old man. (*Pull out a pipe and lights it.*) Vell, he is dead and gone and I hopes in heaven, where no womens can boder him no more. (*Wants to seat himself and then sees Daniel.*) Ah!

Dan. Why do you stare at me like a fool?

Hans. Are you an ghost or an living man?

Dan. And are you crazy or drunk?

Hans. Drunk! Not much! Vhat an ungrateful man you are, Mr. Herbert. Firsht, I fished for you all over de pond, vherby I vorked mineself all in a shveat, and den I runs to de voods and finds you hanging on a tree, and now you calls me drunk.

Dan. Stop your nonsense. I suspect that you bolted with a bottle of champagne to the woods and got beastly drunk. Now leave me alone and don't disturb me any longer.

Hans. (Aside.) Dat ungrateful wretch treats me after all de trouble I had vid him too mean. I'll have mine revenge ! I'll go and set his vife at him ; she'll vash his muddled head clear for him *(Exit.)*

Enter ADELINA.

Adel. I wonder where my truant lover may be. He promised to meet me in the woods ; but disappointed me after all. When I got tired of waiting I went to my room and drew up a deed of separation between Herbert and wife. This will give me a glorious opportunity to begin my career as a lawyer. I'll plead this case in court myself, and at its happy issue triumphantly call out : " Veni, vidi, vici ! "

Dan. Oh, my poor head, my poor head !

Adel. At last I have found my truant. *(Seats herself near Daniel.)*

Dan. (Aside.) My goodness ! What a new and terrible affliction !

Adel. Dear Mr Herbert, I have been occupying myself with your affairs. I have drawn up that deed of separation between you and your suspicious, troublesome wife.

Dan. A deed of separation ! Ma'm, what do you mean ?

Adel. After you had unbosomed yourself of your domestic troubles you begged of me to draw up a deed of separation between you and your wife, and act as your counsellor and defender.

Dan. I was a little excited at the dinner table, and—
(Aside.) Oh dear, oh dear ! What misery that champagne has already inflicted on me ! Oh, my head, my head !

Adel. In the dignity of a free born American lawyer, I'll defend your cause. Cases of this character suit me particularly, and I'll soon rid you of a woman who is not worthy of you

Enter ANNA (but remains in the background).

Dan. Oh, my head, my head !

Adel. Tell me once more all the particulars concerning—

Dan Well, now, as I begin to view this little altercation between me and my wife more coolly, I am coming to the conclusion that I am not altogether blameless in my conduct towards her.

Adel. You excuse her unjust behavior? Oh, frailty, frailty, thy name is man!

Dan. If I be not mistaken, Shakespeare puts it the other way.

Adel. Shakespeare! Shakespeare! I'll soon become another Shakespeare and put him all at naught.

Dan. Are you married, Ma'm?

Adel. Twice before I have informed you that I am still enjoying my liberty—a possession which is most essential in a woman. I am for free love.

Dan. Free love! Ha, ha, ha! Yes, it must be nice to be a Mormon.

Adel. Stop! I did not speak of Mormons. They are the worst oppressors of my sex and the greatest humbug of this part of the globe.

Dan. Free love! But don't you think that for the welfare of mankind the family ties ought to be held sacred?

Adel. Among civilized and enlightened creatures these old fashioned ideas go for naught. Family ties, indeed! The husband betrays the wife, and *vice versa*. The mothers sell their daughters in the matrimonial market like human merchandise to the highest bidder. Any means are good enough to avenge our sex of this outrage. Wait till a man condescends to notice us? Pshaw! Future generations will smile at such a preposterous prejudice!

Dan. You are such a clever girl, Miss Weaver, I think the best you can do is to marry and— (*Aside.*) Oh, I wish I were home!

Adel. Have you any children, Mr. Herbert?

Dan. No, Ma'm; they did not come to bless me.

Adel. No children! And you still hesitate to divorce yourself from your wife? And does she really expect you to keep scrupulously your marriage-vows, when she herself does not even think it becoming in a wife to fulfill the high functions of maternity?

Dan. Well, it was surely not her fault. She dotes on children.

Adel. Don't believe it! Her actions are only guided by selfishness and the desire for pleasure. You surely don't like to die childless.

Dan. Well, I don't know; I imagine myself pretty well off without them; and as I can't get them I'll try to make the best of it.

Adel. Shelter yourself behind a heart that harbors no suspicion, and will keep you from the sad fate to go childless to your grave.

Dan. I'm no longer young, you know, and I may become soon wearisome. All that I stand in need of is a quiet life.

Adel. So you refuse to sign this paper?

Dan. I'll do anything to oblige you, save give up my good wife.

Adel. Then you missed the most excellent opportunity to oblige me.

Dan. That my dear wife is one of the most virtuous and best of her sex, she has proved for twenty years beyond a shadow of doubt.

Adel. Your faith in her may be delusive after all.

Anna. (*Coming forward.*) How dare you urge my husband to a separation from me?

Adel. Madam, I did nothing of the kind.

Anna. Do not aggravate your behavior by adding lies to it. The motive of your baseness is transparent enough. Women of your stamp ought to be arrested, tried, and hanged.

Adel. Madam, a weak-minded man like your husband has no interest for a superior woman.

Anna. My dear husband, can you forgive me?

Adel. How weak and foolish to ask a man's pardon. I blush for these unprincipled women. (*Exit.*)

Dan. Dear wife, there is nothing to forgive. We are all weak and apt to err; but therefore we are not obliged to give up at one throw all our happiness.

Anna. Dearest, I am very much ashamed of my foolishness.

Dan. My darling, there is no cause for shame. I approve of your sister Victoria's saying that we ought to make a liberal allowance for jealousy, but always guard it as a domestic secret. In failing to perform that last wise decree, I became guilty, too. But it was all the fault of Mr. Western's excellent champagne. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter HANS (with a bottle of champagne and a glass.)

Dat old chap Herbert vas a saying to me, vid de most insulting manner, dat I bolted vid an bottle of champagne, and den got drunk. Now dat vas an lie. But I got an bottle

of champagne now ; dough I stealed it not. Our fat cook gaves it me. Dat cook is uncommon spooney on me, but she has too much veight to move me. She veighs at de lowest two hundred and fifty pounds, and dat is too much for me. But I'm sick of de women folks anyhow, and I'm going now for dis beauty. (*Points at the bottle.*) I'll have an jolly good time and drinks here mine champagne in peace. (*Opens the bottle and then pours out a glassful and empties it at one draught.*)

Enter HILDA.

Hans. Ah, dat is an bully champagne. (*Pours out another glass, and when he leads it to his mouth Hilda puts her hand over the glass.*) Takes your hand off, girl! Can't I get no minute of peace in dis place?

Hilda. In half an hour you'll have all the peace you want. We are all going home. Every one seems to be in a hurry to leave this place.

Hans. I'm glad for dat. Vell, Hilda, here goes. (*Drinks.*)

Hilda. Well, good-bye, I'm off.

Hans. Don't you vant an glass, Hilda?

Hilda. To please you, I'll accept your offer. Your health! (*Empties the glass at one draught.*) I thank you. But I have not a minute to lose. Good-bye, Hans. (*Exit.*)

Hans. Hilda, come here one minute, I vants ter ask you someding.

Hilda. Well, be quick, I haven't much time to lose.

Hans. You are such an shmart girl, tell me, Hilda, vhy can't de devil skate?

Hilda. What nonsense! How should I know?

Hans. Vell, can't ye guess?

Hilda. No, I can't!

Hans. Vell, how in hell could he?

Hilda. Hans, I pity you, if you can't make better jokes. Good-bye. (*Exit.*)

Hans. Good-bye, good-bye! (*Looks at the glass and shakes his head.*) Vell, dat girl has an good drain! To please me, she say, vhen she dranks de champagne I offered her, but it seemed to be novays unpleasant to her; gulped it all down like vater. (*Turns the glass over.*) Not a drop she left at the bottom of de glass. (*Pours out a glassfull.*) Vell, here goes! (*Pours out another during the fall of the curtain.*)

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

Parlor and conservatory at Mr. David Jones' residence.

Scene I. VICTORIA and WILLIAM JONES.

Vict. If an education, such as your son's, had proved a successful one it would have been a miracle. Uncle William, I never approved of your indulgence, nor ever shall.

Will. And you never forego an opportunity of expressing your disapproval. I think my David is a capital fellow

Vict. Yes, his boon companions swear by him, and all the frivolous women are in love with him.

Will. What do you know so much *against* my son?

Vict. Sufficiently *about* him to advise you, if you will save him from a public scandal, to assist his wife in trying to guide him to a worthier life. He is still young, and his frivolous habits are not yet ingrained in his nature. Repulse his frivolity and idleness. His mode of living requires an immense amount of money; deny him the means for his extravagances and make him a partner in your business.

Will. Oh, his is a peculiar temperament, and he is very obstinate. He would not like it.

Vict. Uncle, your pliant temper will be the ruin of your son.

Will. Unfortunately I never could be firm; I could never induce him to obey me.

Vict. Uncle, have you no conscience?

Will. I hope I have

Vict. But, surely, a very weak one. Your son's self-willed character was developed by your want of judgment in educating an American boy.

Will. Please let us not resume the old argument. Victoria, why don't you take my son's part and try to reason Bella out of her foolish whims? I really can't see what she has to complain of.

Vict. In a worldly sense she has to all appearances made a fine marriage. To secure the son of a wealthy man is a great thing in the world's eye, and it seems every one must envy her.

Will. And in any other sense?

Vict. End in a whole life's shipwreck.

Will. The coldness between my son and his wife has been growing with alarming rapidity during the past few days.

Vict. If you don't keep him in check, they will become more and more indifferent to each other; then pass into that stage of married life, common enough in our days, when they will only live together and meet in society for appearances sake, keep up a mock-happiness till death will make an end of the farce.

Will. Well let me hope, dear niece, their matrimonial sky will soon be cloudless again with the help of your superior wisdom.

Vict. Rather a dangerous position you place me in. Bella confided to me that she intends to study for the stage.

Will. What confounded nonsense! If she were to go on the stage I'll advise my son to bring an action against her.

Vict. An action!

Will. However, I should prefer to see this matter settled out of court. Why cannot Bella be like any other?

Vict. She said, as your son studies no one's wishes but his own, and never missed a point in the game of dear self, she will try to console herself by following the urging of her talent.

Will. A pretty notion! Never heard such nonsense in all my life.

Vict. She feels a consolation in the conviction that her genius will offer solace and pleasure to thousands.

Will. Bother her genius! Go to the stage! What a dangerous atmosphere for a woman to move in.

Vict. Uncle, I don't like that contemptuous ring in your voice. Wherever a true woman is placed, nothing can tarnish her virtue or lower her dignity. We can never tell whether a woman be true till she is tempted.

Will. 'Gad, this is the most annoying thing I have yet experienced. This scandal will be the death of me.

Vict. In the enthusiasm of my youth I would have given all my wealth to reach the sovereignty and celebrity of a great actress. But I had no talent.

Will. (*Testily.*) I doubt that; I have thought you always a perfect actress

Vict. Uncle, do not try to fight me with the cheap weapon of sarcasm, or I shall declare war on you.

Will. That would be too formidable a declaration ! I'll throw up my weapon at once, and cry for mercy ; for no one could stand the fire of your sarcasm. But, in spite of your enthusiasm for the stage you can't deny that at the present it does not cater for a cultured and high-minded audience. There is a general crying out at the decay of the drama.

Vict. You could not speak a sadder truth ; but the stage is to a certain extent still in its infancy, which leaves its future a blank that can be filled out by imagination.

Will. You arouse my curiosity. Pray, what might its future be ?

Vict. At present, sensational writers cater only for the speculations of greedy managers and stars, and to the jaded palate of the populace, which they make shriek with laughter by their perpetual strain after farcical effects ; but their everlasting imitations and trite commonplaces fill the cultured part of the audience with disgust. These writers have ruined the legitimate drama, and their prime defect is their existence.

Will. That is unfortunately but too true.

Vict. But I see looming in the distance a new era, wherein high-minded American citizens, whose families would like to make the theatre their favorite resort, will take the interest of the stage to heart, and help to purify its atmosphere ; for we can only look to the cultured classes for true sympathy of art. These worthy men will unite and form a society to encourage American dramatic writers by submitting their literary productions to the crucial test of experts ; they will offer prizes for the meritorious ones, and encourage the young author's first efforts which, though not perfect, may show some talent or touch of genius.

Will. That would be an excellent plan.

Vict. Under the watchful care of these noble men the drama, suppressed so long, shall rise transformed like the butterfly out of its dingy chrysalis, glorious and triumphant ! And outraged Thalia will proudly raise her head and applaud these high-minded American citizens who have helped to purify the temple of art, and so deepened the stage into the grandeur of an institution of education for the children of a larger growth. Then even the men of the church will abate their enmity, and make peace with the actor, who now is wondering why his toilsome days and honest efforts are

frowned down by them, and whose injustice makes his laurel-wreath press heavily on his brows. Prejudices will melt like snow before this sunshine of true art.

Will. Quite sublime! But it is of no use to bring those true and high ideas into common life: they are a little too exalted. You may think me very commonplace, but let me advise you to take life as it is, not as it ought to be. Reformers rarely contrive to be happy and successful. To be pleasant is the thing, and after all it costs nothing.

Vict. By selfish people this may be accounted the perfection of wisdom; but do not wrong yourself, dear uncle. Those who know you well like you for your generous heart and noble actions, and I'm convinced that you will be one of the foremost of these noble men.

Will. Victoria, I think you are a genius. You are so very clear-eyed, and look right into people's hearts and at the bottom of things.

Vict. Uncle, you do me too much honor. But, true to my sex, I have grown too discursive. I promised my sister to accompany her to make some purchases, and—

Will. Will you allow me to escort you? I too have some purchases to make, and then I have a meeting to attend to in behalf of those confounded stocks.

Vict. Uncle, a few moments ago, you made the flattering remark that I am possessed of a genius which looks right at the bottom of things. Shall I put my genius to the test and look into the future and tell you the fate of these annoying but already too much premiumed stocks?

Will. Pray, oblige me.

Vict. The issue of the meeting will be clever, but evil. Let me whisper my oracle in your ear: The stocks will get watered! (*She laughs, and exit, William, also laughing, exit.*)

Enter BELLA and DAVID.

David. Are you going to pout with me from morning till evening?

Bella. Pout? I don't pout. I wouldn't think of such a childish thing.

David. Come, it annoys me to see my pretty wife with a frown on her brows. You seemed to admire that bracelet with the sapphires so much, I'll buy it for you with pleasure if you will accept it.

Bella. You'll do better to send it to your "loving little white mouse," dear Deechy Datchy.

David. (*Aside.*) Confound it! (*Aloud.*) The whole story about that white mouse is all made up by those gossiping, tattling women.

Bella. When Mrs Herbert imagined her husband dead, her grief overmastered her to such a degree that she accused you as the cause of her misery, and so told me everything.

David. In this world no one seems to be sincere! Believe me, there is no truth in it. The story is conjured up by my cousins, and is nothing but a diabolical plot to disturb my domestic peace. I'll not allow myself to get angry, and you see me now at my best, but—

Bella. Then I should not desire to see you at your worst. But I fear no one; and you least of all.

David. (*Aside.*) I can only look at her wonderingly, and can't help admiring her. (*Aloud.*) When I talk to you it is certainly in your own interest only. Don't throw your happiness away through mere want of reflection.

Bella. Happiness! Indeed, sir, I have reflected.

David. If there seemed to be some singularity in my behavior—

Bella. Evil tongues have given this singularity of yours a different name; but of course they deserve no credence. I can only forgive you under certain conditions.

David. Madam, I don't stand in need of forgiveness. I think I rendered you no slight favor in marrying you.

(*Bella looks steadfastly in David's face, then takes a vase and rearranges the flowers in it.*)

David. (*Aside.*) She met my gaze unmoved! Does not even deign to answer me! Incredible! (*Aloud.*) Do not listen to my gossiping cousins any more; they are a bad lot, and will corrupt and ruin you.

Bella. Is it so easy to be corrupted or ruined?

David. Of course, it's the easiest thing in the world.

Bella. You quite perplex me.

David. I think my cousin Victoria a frivolous and mischievous woman.

Bella. You are such an expert in regard to women. You ought to know that—

David. I am too good for you.

Bella. Extremes meet; and in joining contrasts lies love's

delight. The satisfaction you derive from the idea that you are too good for me will indemnify you for all you have suffered during our marriage.

David. (Aside.) By Jove! She is actually fooling me. *(Aloud.)* What confounded hypocrites all you women are! Madam, you are not a dutiful wife!

Bella. Tell me, my severe mentor, and are you a dutiful husband?

David. Of course I am. Your behavior is unendurable and must not be submitted to. If you were really in earnest to carry out your foolish whim about the stage, it would be equivalent to a separation between us. A woman must obey, as the marriage service commands.

Bella. But I'll not obey; and if you regret your marriage, I'm willing to dissolve it.

David. On what grounds?

Bella. Well, let's put it mildly and say incompatibility of temper.

David. Bella, you are playing a dangerous game. Then you imply that you would be glad to get rid of me?

Bella. I desire nothing of the kind. I simply intend to carry out my purpose, because I want a career of my own, and not idle my time away like you. To be a commonplace housewife don't satisfy me any longer, and I am craving for the glorious and intoxicating triumphs of an actress. Does it not inspire you with enthusiasm, too?

David. It inspires me with very moderate enthusiasm.

Bella. Home fills me with ennui and satiety! I accept this chance as providential, and I know that my lot is sealed! Oh, what a brilliant whirlpool opens before my eyes!

David. (Aside.) Why, the woman is mad! *(Aloud.)* You are devoid of conscience to conceive such a preposterous idea for a moment!

Bella. I have no sentimentality.

David. Indeed, so it seems. But I may be pardoned for not yielding so easily to your delusions. Don't carry out your whim, if you be wise. Women who get out of the ordinary groove are not always the happiest of their sex. You are a wife and a mother, but still very inexperienced. Without your husband you are no one; society will look down upon you. Opposition on your side is foolishness, obstinacy, and blindness.

Bella. My dear, what exaggerated language ! Pray, do not exaggerate ; it has gone out of fashion.

David. And how dare you attempt such nonsense without knowing if it suits me ? If I didn't love you I wouldn't trouble myself to reason with you, but let you ruin yourself. Come now, little pussy, is it serious ?

Bella. So it really does not suit you ?

David. No, indeed, it does not suit me at all (*Aside.*) Aha, she is sliding round.

Bella. Then I'm sorry for your sake ; but, I told you, my lot is sealed irrevocably !

David. If you persist in your foolishness, the time will, in every likelihood, come when you'll condemn and reproach yourself at having made yourself the laughing stock of your friends.

Bella. Perhaps it might gratify my vanity to be the object of so much attention.

David. Poor, vain woman ! (*Aside.*) I must confess that this affair begins to look very serious at last ! Her crisp, unswerving tone seems to indicate more than a freak.

Bella. (*Aside.*) I have promised my dear Victoria not to yield to him, till he confesses his guilt and asks my pardon. But it is a harder task than I imagined.

David. Oh, by Jove, every woman is an enigma ! The future I had depicted by your side had been all serene and fair.

Bella. Don't you feel some scruples as to the cause of your disappointment ?

David. (*Speaks very slow and hesitating.*) Suppose, I offer by way of extenuation the fact—that I have been—led astray by bad example, and—

Bella. (*Walks to his side and puts her hand on his shoulder.*) And ? Go on, dear.

David. (*Aside.*) No, I must not ask forgiveness like a hen-pecked fool ! It would be the ruin of me !

Bella. (*Speaking softly, without removing her hand from David's shoulder.*) You did not finish your last sentence. Dear David, what is it you have to offer by way of extenuation ?

David. Oh, never mind. (*Aside.*) I must take up another and safer line of argument ; and if it must be, even shed a few tears. (*Aloud.*) Bella, undutiful mother, have you never

bestowed a thought on your poor child? It is heartrending ! It brings tears to my eyes.

Bella. (*Looks at him coldly, then walks away from his side and busies herself with the flowers again.*) Our child is all right. Don't let anxiety for his welfare be an impediment to your peace of mind ; but, pray, shed your tears as freely as you can.

David. (*Aside.*) She is actually quizzing me.

Bella. But don't take this matter so seriously to heart I may grant you the privilege to protect and watch over me and my child ; but that would be all.

David. You don't appear to be very timid and in need of a protector.

Bella. You are right I only assigned you this post of honor for your own satisfaction

David. Well, I may surprise you one day, when—

Bella. You are not very likely to surprise me who knows you so well.

David. Madam, do not forget yourself.

Bella. Sir, you have constantly forgotten yourself.

David. (*Aside.*) She is pretty sharp ! I'm getting the worst of it. (*Aloud.*) You'll not avert my suspicion, Madam, and secure my confidence. I'll not make a fool of myself in serving you in 'your future vagaries, as a screen. When I married you—

Bella. I imagined that I had a good chance of happiness in becoming your wife. But now I know my mistake, and my chosen profession shall console me for—

David. And what shall console me ?

Bella. (*Stands face to face with David.*) Your modesty and the noble consciousness of your innocence.

Enter MARY (with a baby in her arms).

Mary. Mam, Miss Weaver would like to see you on very important business. Shall I show her in ?

Bella. No, I'll go and take her to my sitting-room. (*Exit.*)

Mary. (*Seats herself, with the baby covered up with a veil, on a chair near the window.*)

David. She really defies me and tries to make a fool of me. She is frightfully impudent ; but it is a very piquant impudence ! Though her audacity irritates me to unceasing pain and anger, I must not submit to her frolics. What a

soft maiden and wife she has hitherto been, and now how her proud lips smiled with contempt. It is a pity I didn't take more pains to study her character. Really, I don't know what to do! No, really, I don't! Oh, this whole business will drive me wild! It would be too dreadfully foolish to ask her pardon and promise meekly to be a good boy in future, and all that sort of hosh! It would be too degrading and silly! My dignity as a husband would be gone forever! Well, I'll pull myself together and try to act wiser in the future, and give up my little follies; but I'll never forget myself so much as to ask her forgiveness. (*Goes and kisses the baby.*) She didn't even notice her child. Oh, what an enigma is a woman! (*Exit.*)

Mary Well, I declare, he is getting elegant. I've never seen him as yet kiss his baby as tenderly before. And it's quite a new thing for him not to chuck me under the chin and pinch my cheeks. I was just making up my mind to give my madam warning on account of her husband's free and easy manners, to which I could never take. When I rebuked his impudence he always called me a peevish and pettish little goose. But I'm always remembering my mother's saying: Mary, she used to say, when a gentleman begins to pinch your cheeks and offers you presents, don't be a fool and think yourself flattered by his condescension; but look out sharp and snub him as hard as you can; otherwise you'll fall in a trap full of pitch that'll stick to you all your born days.

Enter HANS.

Hans. Mary, is your master at home?

Mary. No, he went out a few minutes ago.

Hans. Dat is too bad. Vell, oblige me and give him dis letter from mine master.

Mary. All right, Mr. Erning.

Hans. Don't call me dat vay; call me Hans, I likes dat best. Vell, Mary, have you dought it over vhat I said to you last night?

Mary. I have thought over it, but I don't know how to answer you. Perhaps you are still in love with Hilda. I'm but an ignorant girl and she is so clever. Indeed, I'm but a greenhorn.

Hans. De greenhorns jist suit me, and you'll do for mine wife. I hates de clever girls. Vhenever I try an little joke dat clever Hilda always murders mine vit right out.

Mary. Hilda has saved lots of money and I'm but a poor girl.

Hans. Never you mind, mine little girl! I've saved enough dat I can open an grocery store, and mine fader has plenty of silver to back us. You are an honest girl, but dat Hilda is an lump of deceit and humbug. Mary, don't you like me an little bit? Tell me now, for I goes to-night vid mine master to de vest, and so I'd like ter know.

Mary. Oh. Hans. I'm so sorry that you have to go away!

Hans. Vell, don't fret, mine girl, we'll soon be back again. Mine master is all mixed up in de mind and vill not stay away long from dat clever woman he vas so sweet on; so it seems to be now all over vid deir courting. Every morning I'd to bring her lots of flowers, but for five days mine master didn't send her as much as an leaf. Vell, vell, she is too clever an woman, too, for mine master, and he ought to be glad dat he got safe out of her traps. 'Mary, when I comes back, I wants to marry right away. Don't you vant me for your old man?

Mary. Hans, I think I really do like you.

Hans. My dear girl, you make me very happy! Let me kiss you for dat kind—

Mary. Hans, take care, and don't wake up the baby!

Hans. Vell, I'll restrain mineself. Vat is de name of dat little girl?

Mary. It is no girl; it is a boy. His name is Alfonso Adolphus; but we call him by the pet name Nony.

Hans. Mary vhat would you say when ve'll have such an little popsy-vopsy?

Mary. Oh, Hans, don't, don't!

Hans. When we are married and ve close up de store on Sundays, vill it not be fine when ve takes our babies to de country for an airing, one little fellow holding tight your skirt in his little fist and de oder on mine arm and de youngest in an little carriage I push before me? Mary, wouldn't you like dat?

Mary. Oh, dear Hans, that would indeed be elegant. I hear my madam's voice, and you better go now.

Hans. Vell, I'll not say good-bye, now; I'll see you again before I leave vid mine master.

Mary. Hans, be sure not to go off without bidding me farewell.

Hans. Don't you be alarmed about dat, mine girl. When Hans say a ding he means it. (*Exit.*)

Mary. How dearly I love that good Hans. I thank you, Father in Heaven, that you have given to me, poor girl, such an honest, kind friend.

Enter BELLA and ADELINA.

Adel. My dear Madam, you must be firm. Do not allow your husband to trample on you. Let me plead your case and I'll settle this affair to your satisfaction.

Bella. (*Has been looking fondly at her child.*) I dare not kiss my darling for fear of waking him up. Put him in his crib, Mary. Be careful that you don't expose him to the draught, and you had better close the window in the bedroom.

(*Mary goes off, but is met at the door by Victoria, who just enters the room. Victoria looks fondly at the baby and pats its dress. Bella and Adelina have been whispering during this time. Mary exit. Victoria comes forward.*)

Vict. Good morning, Miss Weaver. Bella, your darling boy is growing lovelier every day. Don't you think him a charming baby, Miss Weaver?

Adel. I didn't look at him. I don't like babies.

Vict. Ladies, I am heading this subscription in behalf of the poor destitute Jews who have been driven away so cruelly from their homes in Russia. Will you be so kind as to assist me in my efforts by adding your names to mine?

Bella. Most willingly.

Vict. And you, Miss Weaver?

Adel. I'll not give anything to those Jews. Why, Mrs. Peabody, I thought you were a Christian!

Vict. So I humbly dare to call myself. But, neglecting the opportunity to relieve my fellow-creatures, how should I venture to lay claim any longer to the sacred name of a Christian? My carriage is at the door. Will you oblige me, ladies, with your company for a ride?

Adel. We have important matters to discuss, and so you must excuse us, Madam.

Vict. What were you conspiring when I entered the room?

Bella. Come and join the conspirators. Miss Weaver is trying to persuade me to bring an action against my husband.

Vict. I hope Miss Weaver is not in earnest. A separation between husband and wife should not be thought of till all other means of reconciliation have failed. Miss Weaver,

have you really the heartlessness to suggest such a thing to a loving wife and mother?

Adel. Not heartlessness, but courage. The latter remains an instinct in me.

Vict. It is a pity that it did not find a nobler cause to defend.

Adel. To defend the rights of oppressed women is the noblest of causes. But if Mrs. Jones does not desire a divorce from her husband, I could procure a separation for her.

Vict. Heaven has intended women to be kind and conciliating.

Adel. Bosh! Heaven did nothing of the kind. To be like men and share their rights in everything is a woman's privilege.

Vict. That would place her in a wrong position, and divest her of her greatest charm—her womanhood and grace.

Adel. The emancipation of woman, so long enslaved, shall soon come, and the slaves shall make their masters cling to them with fear and trembling. Mine is a fearless life! I look upward to the sun of a new era! I am the living symbol of unchained womanhood! Listen to me! listen to me! listen to me! The balance holding the destiny of woman, upon whose issue all her future hangs, will sway the scale to her side, will free her of her bondage, and allow her to claim the liberty to which she is entitled. There are still bold strokes to be dealt by our sex. They fear us already, though they still persist in oppressing us like purblind idiots; but we shall turn and conquer them. What we only saw in the mist of dreams we shall at last behold in reality. The conflicts shall be ended between men and women, and rejoicing in our triumphs the vanquished men must acknowledge us as their equals.

Vict. And you are a defender of free love, too, Miss Weaver?

Adel. I am, as it is becoming in the woman of a new era.

Vict. If women were all like you the world would go to perdition. You are not the woman who will create a new era, but the woman of evil who would ruin the civilized world's foundation, religion, and family-ties.

Adel. Religion! Family-ties! What ancient rubbish!

Vict. Your motive is immoderate ambition, self-glorification, guided by egotism, but surely not to effect the welfare of mankind. A woman must not covet the duties of men.

Adel. Well, tell me, Madam, have we not business capacities, talent for science and genius for art as well as men? Woman must be a man's partner; but not his slave.

Vict. Since Sappho's time women have distinguished themselves, and have been duly acknowledged and admired by the world. Your constant harping on women being men's slaves is utterly devoid of sense, and I can only laugh it down as a ridiculous delusion. Out of a hundred households there are ninety-nine where the man is the ruled one, though he may be happily unconscious of it. A true girl can influence her brothers and friends, and once married she will rear her sons into a noble manhood. Without such mothers do you think the world would have such great men? The household is the kingdom of woman, where she must reign supreme by law divine.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

Garden of William Jones' country seat. An illumination with Chinese lanterns.

Scene I. HARRY and VIOLET.

Violet. Dear Harry, so we are happy at last; though not exactly as we have hoped for. My guardian and benefactor has lost all his happiness by my foolish suspicion.

Harry. According to Mrs Peabody's tacit agreement to our proceedings, we have done everything to encourage your guardian to hope for forgiveness from my benefactress, who is always generous to a fault. He promised Mr. Jones to come to his garden party to-night.

Violet. Dear Harry, I feel so guilty that I have wronged you by my jealousy! But I promise never to give you offence again.

Harry. Even if we should, occasionally, have some little spasms of jealousy, love shall plead our case against suspicion, and if jealousy shows for a little while contempt of court, love shall soon win our case, and restore trust and peace to our hearts. These little lovers' skirmishes shall only serve to make us dearer to each other.

Violet. Dearest, thanks for your kindness to your foolish Violet.

Harry. The day we first met I felt magnetically drawn to you; and when I asked you your name and you softly lisped, Violet! then I felt that Heaven had thrown you in my path to become the bright sunshine of my life. The fragrance of the flower, from which you have derived your name, has always moved the poor boy's heart with soft emotion, but now it has gained a still deeper meaning in the heart of the man.

Violet. Your Violet shall try to make herself worthy of your love, and that of your noble benefactress. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter HANS.

Hans. I vonder vere my little Mary is! She promised to meet me here in dis place. Aha, dere she comes! No, it's dat foolish Miss Adelina and Mr. Jones. (*Hides himself.*)

Enter WILLIAM and ADELINA.

Will. You put it very cleverly; but suppose men would continue the battle, and were not to surrender?

Adel. Then the alternative is simple. Let them listen to reason, and make a compromise, or we shall make them slaves upon whom woman shall put her foot as a conqueror. I'll hurl my wisdom in fiery words like rocks upon them! And when under the influence of my teachings their minds have broadened and deepened, my merits shall ultimately win their recognition. But it shall come like the flash of lightning and the crash of thunder; and then they shall kneel before me and behold me in my glory and my power, and there shall be no one on earth stronger than myself. For all the generations to come immortal life shall be my fate. They shall embalm me in their hearts and I shall never grow old!

Hans. (*Aside.*) Old! Why, she is already as old as Meshusalem!

Will. The universe holds no cleverer woman than you, Miss Weaver. I shouldn't be at all surprised if you were even a wonder of perfection in culinary art.

Adel. I thought that occupation always beneath me; but to please you, dear Mr. Jones, I should even make an effort to perfect myself in that branch too. What a pity you are a widower! How dreary and hollow your life must be.

Will. What a pity you are for free-love, dear Miss Weaver.

Adel. Who told you that story?

Will. Mr. Herbert informed me of it.

Adel. That gentleman has evidently a very slanderous tongue. I had to rebuke his advances, and he ought to be careful not to say anything to my disadvantage.

Hans. (*Aside.*) What an dreadful liar dat old girl is!

Will. Pray, calm yourself! Miss Weaver, I should like to know in what position you stand to Mr. Western, as you have taken up quarters at his residence?

Hans. (*Aside.*) Yes, to my plague and all de oder servants.

Adel. Mr. Western is my cousin. A month ago he wrote to me very kindly to honor him with a prolonged visit in order to chaperon his ward Violet in society. However suspicious matters may look, you need fear nothing. If my

cousin were to die with love for me I shall never encourage him.

Hans. (Aside.) Mine master vill not murder hisself for dat cranky girl.

Adel. But I must give this matter more serious reflection. People might talk, they are so exceedingly vicious.

Hans. (Aside.) Never seed any more vicious dan dat girl.

Adel. I'll gather up my dignity and self-esteem, and shall trust from this moment only in you, dear Mr. Jones.

Will. Oh! (*Aside*) 'Gad, perhaps she is going to propose to me.

Adel. What ails you, dear Mr. Jones?

Will. For a couple of days I have had a little neuralgia in my arm, and just now there is a stinging pain that—

Adel. Did you use anything for it?

Will. I have taken cold water baths, and—

Adel. My dear Mr. Jones, you couldn't have made a greater mistake. Water-cures will be the ruin of men. I am an expert in the science of medicine, and I maintain that water should not be used for the human body at all.

Hans. Dat's jist like de old dirty girl she is.

Will. Though I am a great admirer of your superior wisdom, I may, nevertheless, venture to suggest that cleanliness—

Adel. Listen to me attentively, and all your scruples shall vanish before the soundness of my theory. Warmth and a vigorous circulation of the blood are the greatest promoters to health. The simplest method to produce such a desirable condition of the body is friction. Dear Mr. Jones, take a brush, and every morning and evening rub it moderately over your skin. This simple proceeding will keep the latter soft and clean, and create a powerful circulation of the blood. Bath-tubs are infernal machines, and water-cures ought to be forbidden by law, and in case of transgression, punished as murder in the first degree.

Hans. (Aside.) Dat is an bully old girl, dat Adelina.

Will. It can not be denied that there is some force in your new theory, Miss Weaver.

Adel. You ought to communicate it to all your friends.

Will. You are the most superior woman I ever met. I shouldn't wonder if you were even bent on the discovery of the philosopher's stone.

Adel. I don't bother my head with rubbish; but I have

given my thought very much to the transmutation of souls. I am a fanatic on that subject.

Hans. (Aside.) She is an crazy girl in everyding.

Adel. Permit me to explain its principles, and—

Will. Spare me, Miss Weaver. An explanation of the principles of transmutation of souls would be too great an ordeal for a commonplace man.

Adel. Will you not interest yourself in this matter for your Adelina's sake, dearest William?

Hans. (Aside.) Now she calls him already dearest William. Wicked old girl!

Will. Whatever topic you may choose I shall meekly submit; but I can't stand that transmutation of soul business. It's nonsense!

Adel. It is of an enormous interest to me, who has read all the Greek, Latin, and Buddhist classics in the original.

Hans. (Aside.) Dat's sure an big lie.

Will. That kind of reading would be too dry for me; I'm not a bookish man. The very bindings and letterings of those books frighten me.

Adel. Will you promise me to call on me to-morrow, dearest William?

Will. I may call around some day next week. Important business—

Adel. I shall wait for you, and think of you when I have high feast of science and art in my lonely chamber, and anticipate the hourly sweetness that is in store for me. But don't forget about the friction of the skin; for your health is as dear to me as my own. I shall be in future your teacher, your defender, and protector

Will. Don't you think that would invert our relations as—

Adel. If I have once become love's bondswoman you need not fear that your dignity will lose by our marriage.

Will. (Aside.) 'Gad, this begins to look dangerous; she may bring an action for breach against me if—

Adel. This is the first time in my life that I realize, with blushing cheeks, the power of love. (*Takes Will's arm.*)

Will. (Aside.) My goodness! Now I'm in for it! (*Exeunt.*)

Hans. Vhy, dat old girl is an reglar man-trap. If she ever catches dat poor old chap, he'll not vant much friction; she'll make it hot enough for him. But vhat's true dat's

true. Water is no good, and as for drinking it, brrrr! it make mine stomach sick only to dink of it. But I must go and try to find mine Mary. (*Exit.*)

Enter VICTORIA and BELLA.

Bella. Dear Victoria, you must release me from my promise. My poor David appears to be really unhappy, and I fear that I might lose his love if—

Vict. For both your sakes, I implore you, to be firm and hold out to the end. Be kind to him, but not affectionate till he confesses his guilt and asks your forgiveness.

Bella. I have received many congratulations on my birthday this morning, but none that touched my heart more than those of my dear husband. I had great difficulty to contain myself, not—

Vict. So you have made a little fool of yourself. Don't be afraid to lose your husband's love; you never possessed it more than now. He shall soon share the fate of my little parrot Lixy, which I brought from Mexico. First he beat his wings against the bars like any fresh-caged bird. But under judicious treatment and tender care he became soon used to his captivity, and understands me now like a human being, and loves me with all his soul.

Bella. Soul! Victoria, you are joking. A bird has no soul.

Vict. How can my birdie love me, if his creator has not endowed him with a soul? Love, this most precious gift on earth, for which we may pay what we choose but cannot get, is in my judgment the greatest proof of the existence of a soul in all of God's creatures.

Bella. Your birdie's demonstrations of love for you ought to make one a convert to your belief in his soul. Hush! I hear my husband's steps. Let us withdraw. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter DAVID.)

(*Sits himself on a bench and then flings away his cigar.*) I can't even enjoy a good cigar any more! Ah, I feel wretched and sick of life! (*Buries his face in his hands.*)

Enter HILDA.

Hilda. (*Aside.*) Ah, there is Mr. David! My madam has given me warning and my Frenchman has bolted. The best thing I can do, under the present circumstances, would be to accept Mr. David's offer to provide for me in the future. (*Aloud.*) Mr. David, you don't look very spry this evening.

David. I shall deem it very spry in you, if you were to mind your own business. Don't bother me with your impudence and leave me alone. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

Hilda. (*Aside.*) My gracious! if he turns preacher I wonder what shall become of us poor girls. There comes his wife. I'd better give her a wide berth, for she never seemed to take to me. (*Exit.*)

Enter BELLA.

David. (*Jumps up and goes to meet her.*)

Bella. Pardon me, I was not aware of your presence here, otherwise I shouldn't have disturbed you.

David. You can never disturb me; only make me happy by letting me enjoy your company. Dearest wife, you look lovely this evening.

Bella. There are lovelier women in this world than I am.

David. There does not exist one in it whose loveliness could charm me more than yours. Bella, I feel very unhappy?

Bella. What frets you? Is there anything I can do for you—tell me

David. In all my life I have never been at a loss how to express my feelings, but now—

Bella. Go on, David.

David. Bella, this moment shall decide both our lives. I have been the spoiled child of a doting father and the pet of his numerous friends. Life brought me no anxiety, no regret. Self-indulgence and hunting after pleasure were the only objects of my existence. I had never known before what unhappiness meant. All at once my past life seems to me base and frivolous; all that is nobler and better in my nature answers to your appeal to my love and honor. Be my good angel—not my judge. Though your protest and indignation are but justified, cannot you excuse your culpable and foolish husband?

Bella. (*Aside.*) There is something in his eye that goes straight to my heart.

David. (*Throws himself on the bench and hides his face behind his hands.*) Ah, I wish I were dead and at peace forever! (*Rises and then falls on his knees before Bella.*) Bella, I feel shame and remorse, and I ask your pardon for all the wrong I have done to you! Follow the dictates of your own heart—let it be your guide; if you cannot love me—do you not pity me at least?

Bella. I do not pity you.

David. Ah, what cruel punishment you inflict on me!

Bella. Pity I must refuse you; but I can offer you that which has never wavered in my heart for my dear husband: my fond love!

David. And so you forgive me?

Bella. Forgive! What is left to forgive since you love me?

David. And you long no more for the triumphs of an actress?

Bella. I only long to be sheltered by a husband I love and honor.

David. Dearest wife, henceforth I shall honestly strive to merit your esteem and love. Ah, it makes my head giddy, this release of pain.

Bella. Dearest our friends will miss us, let us go and join them. This birthday has brought me the greatest gift on earth: love and happiness. And are you really happy, too, dearest Davy?

David. (*Drawing Bella to his heart.*) The fast loud throbs of my heart can tell you that there is not a man alive who is happier than your devoted husband! (*Exeunt*)

Enter HANS and MARY.

Mary. Dear Hans, I'm so glad to see you back so soon again. Did you enjoy your trip?

Hans. Vell, no, it was an queer traveling. One day dis vay, de oder day dat vay, and so on. But vhen mine master received an letter from Miss Violet he acted like an crazy man vhen he had read it. He ordered me to pack up again, and back ve goes home again and here we are.

Mary. You have just come in time to my madam's garden party.

Hans. Dat's jist vhat mine master come for in such an hurry.

Mary. Didn't you hear of poor Hilda's misfortunes?

Hans. Not an vord.

Mary. Her Frenchman has bolted; he has gone to Paris without her.

Hans. Serves dat bad girl right.

Mary. He hadn't paid his landlady a cent of board for three months. When she asked him for her money he always gave as an excuse that accounts could not be squared with his fashionable customers. When she decided to oust him, he had already bolted and so cheated her out of all her money. And the diamond ring he gave to Hilda is not worth anything.

Hans. I never trusted dat sly monkey. Once I met him in an oyster saloon and dere he invite me to eat and drink vid him. He stuffed and drinks like an hog, but never showed cash vhen de bill vas to be settled. He behaved like an regl ar deadhead. I had ter pay de whole bill out of mine pocket.

Enter HILDA.

Hilda. Dear Hans, what a happy surprise to see you here.

Hans. Vell, I can't say dat much for mineself. (*Takes a bouquet out of its paper wrap.*) *Mary,* I forgots to give you someding. Here, mine darling.

Mary. Oh, Hans! I thank you a thousand times! Nobody ever has given me a bouquet in all my born life before.

Hans. Mine girl, dat's jist vhat suits me.

Hilda. (*Aside*) Why, he is getting quite a swell! But he does that only to spite me; he don't care a whit for that stupid girl. (*Aloud.*) Dear Hans, I don't care for that foolish Frenchman, any more; because I have found out that my heart loves no one but you.

Hans. You can't bamboozle me any more! Go to your Frenchman, who vants to introduce you in Paris to his sisters and his cousins and his aunts.

Hilda. Desert me, if you will, but I'll take revenge and sue you for breach.

Hans. Vell, dat's de coolest ding I ever hears. She jilts me firsht for dat gouty Frenchman, and den she vants to shue me for breach. Dat girl has de satan in her body.

Hilda (to Mary). In my opinion, its shocking behavior in you, brazen-faced girl, to flirt with my intended husband.

Hans. Now, you sly-boots, don't talk to mine innocent Mary like dat, or you'll rouse de lion in mine breast. Mine Mary is—

Hilda. An artful spider! Do I deserve such treatment, Hans?

Hans. Of course you do, you coiling snake.

Hilda. Have you no pity for your Hilda?

Hans. Not a bit! Do you dink I'm an idiot, an ass? You are an smuggler of contraband goods—would smuggle too many friends in your husband's home. Oh, I'd like to smash an looking glass you is so foud of, over your foolish head.

Hilda. (Laughs mockingly.) Would you, indeed?

Mary. Hans, don't mind her laughing at you.

Hans. Vell, if she laughs, I'll outroar her. *(Roars out with laughter and then places himself face to face with Hilda, and sticks his tongue in his cheek and nods his head.)*

Hilda. You vulgar fellow! Don't stick your tongue in your cheek.

Hans. I sticks mine tongue where I likes to. I told mine Mary dat I'd prefer to eat an piece of mouldy bread and drink water vid her dan to—

Hilda. Soda water you mean, to recover from your beer swigging. You would sooner murder your wife than give up gulping down barrels of beer.

Hans. Vhat a dare-devil shmood tongue dat girl has hanging in her moud. Now, you prickly crocus, shove off! Pack yourself out of mine sight!

Hilda. Your street slang is only fit for a yellow nigger.

Hans. Yellow nigger! Ha, ha, ha! Dat's enough to tickle anybody. Come, mine Mary, dis is no company for you. De music vill soon strike up, and we'll have the first dance together.

Hilda. You can't dance! You don't even know how to keep step to the music.

Hans. Vell, I knows enough to keep step vid mine Mary. Come, mine darling.

Hilda. (Calls mockingly laughing after them.) When you are married, you splendid couple, I'll come and see you some-times.

Hans. Save us de boder! I'll not put mine little birdie togeder vid an vicious cat. (*Mary and Hans exeunt.*)

Hilda. Well, I don't care that I have lost my fellows. There are plenty of fools in this world, and for a superior girl like me it will not take much to catch them. (*Exit.*)

Enter VICTORIA and GEORGE.

George. I am afraid that my communications shall be of but little interest to you.

Vict. I take interest in all my fellow-creatures' troubles, and as soon as I am able to relieve them, I try my best. You told me that you had *something* to tell—

George. I have *much* to tell; but before all let me inform you of the origin of my ward's birth. You, as well as Harry Clifton, whom you so generously saved from misery and desolation, have now a right to become acquainted with Violet's early life.

Vict. Please sit down.

George. Pardon me, I cannot sit down. When I begin to review my past my brain becomes on fire, and—

Vict. Pray, compose yourself. Let us delay this review of a life which is so painful to you.

George. Permit me to speak to you now.

Vict. Pray, go on, I am listening.

George. After I had been married two years, my late wife's selfish extravagance became unendurable. Her life was nothing but one string of pleasure. She invented excuses for her frequent absence; but one day her non-arrival at home aroused my anxiety, as I could not explain her absence. The next day I received a letter from her. What my eyes read I did not know; but I knew that she had deserted me—for whom I could not guess. Three years elapsed without finding a trace of her. One day I received a letter from my brother, wherein he besought me to come to him before he parted from this world. I hurried to his bedside, and there, when his sight began to fail him, he told me the deadly wrongs done to me. Well, a deathbed repentance! Then and there I learned that my wife had deserted me for his sake. First they had aimlessly moved on together, and when his creditors had laid claim to the last of his property, and he was a ruined man, the woman, who had betrayed me, told him that she did not think it pleasant to live with a man who

did not know where to turn for a dollar, and left him too. Though he used no daggers, his confession stabbed me to the heart! But I did not wish to turn the steel against a dying man and a brother. His entreaties even prevailed on me to yield to his desire to take care of his child, which he had contrived to hide away from its faithless mother. He derived great consolation from the thought of having his infant daughter thus placed beyond the pernicious influence of the woman whose love for her offspring proved to be in the end the single thread of gold unraveled from the treacherous net of a lifetime of sin. Twelve years after my brother's death she discovered that her daughter Violet had been entrusted to my care. One bitter wintry Christmas night the door of my library opened, and at the threshold I saw a woman very poorly and thinly clad. She stood motionless and gazed at me beseechingly. When I fastened my eyes on her flushed and haggard face she fell on her knees and implored of me with tears of prayer to let her see her child. Thus at last I met my faithless wife. She uttered, in broken whispers, some excuses for the wrongs done to me, and crouching with fear and despair in her eyes, her head sank lower beneath the gaze of the man she had wronged. The solemn pealing of the Christmas-bells, which announced peace and joy to men, pleaded powerfully in her behalf, and I could not find it in my heart to drive her a stranger from her child. As it happened, Violet, who was spending her vacation with me, was entering the room at the moment, and seeing her child, her mother, frantic with grief and joy, threw herself on her knees before her daughter, and then lost consciousness. It was a painful but touching situation. For a couple of months the wretched woman lingered at death's door, and then died repentant beneath the roof of her forgiving husband in the arms of her devoted and loving child. You weep! Does my shame so move you?

Vict. Not yours; you have no share in it. The wisdom of the poet's words:

"There is a soul of goodness in things ill,
Would men observingly distill it out,"

you have verified by your noble conduct.

George. Violet's birth is very discreditable to her, and I fear—

Vict. It is not the least discreditable to her; the discredit rests with her parents. It would be cruel to let such an innocent and pure girl suffer for their sin.

George. Noblest of women! In your exquisite womanly grace and generosity of heart you appear to me the incarnation of my golden dreams of youth! Let me bend my knee and thus ask, with the agony of remorse, your forgiveness! Like sunshine your love had fallen in my dreary life, and when I wronged you I hardly knew what feeling I experienced.

Vict. May I suggest jealousy?

George. I now agree with you that sincere love brings to us a natural jealousy, of which we have no cause to be ashamed. However, I have wronged you so deeply that I fear—

Vict. What!

George. You shall never be able to forgive.

Vict. Words of forgiveness coming from lips so proud plead to my heart, and—

George. Dare I hope for the priceless gift of your love? In spite of my doubt and suspicion?

Vict. My heart is yours beyond doubt, beyond suspicion.

(The orchestra begins to play a waltz.)

(Hans and Mary enter the stage dancing.)

Hans. Don't dat shving fine, mine Mary?

Mary. Oh, Hans, it's elegant! *(Dancing, exeunt.)*

Enter dancing, Daniel and Anna, David and Bella, Violet and Harry. Victoria and George join in the dance. Adelina (who entered the stage after Victoria's last words, has been looking disdainfully at the dancers, then says aside :) Foolish people! To rejoice in dancing I consider only a species of lunacy.

William Jones (who entered with the dancers makes now a deep bow before Adelina, and says): Miss Adelina, will you be so kind as to favor me with a dance?

Adel. My dearest William, with all my heart! *(William and Adelina join the dancers, but try in vain to keep step to the music.)*

END OF ACT IV.

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